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Approved For Release 2004/01/28 : CIA-RDP82T00285R000200190023-9

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2 October 1979

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, EXSUBCOM

SUBJECT : Comments on NPIC Proposal Concerning [REDACTED]
Film Processing and Exploitation

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REFERENCES : (a) NPIC Memo, NPIC/D-331/79, "SR-71 Coverage
of Cuba," 17 August 1979 [REDACTED]
(b) USIB Memorandum, [REDACTED] "Policy
and Procedures for Processing, Handling and
Exploitation of Selected National Airborne
Photographic Reconnaissance Missions,"
2 June 1975, Reviewed and Updated by
EXSUBCOM, April 1979 [REDACTED]

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1. This presents CIA's views concerning [REDACTED]
memorandum (Ref. a) in which he proposes that imagery acquired
from SR-71 missions of Cuba be processed and reproduced at
[REDACTED] and initially exploited at NPIC. For the purpose
here, it is assumed that only overflight missions are to be
considered and not those solely peripheral. Also, no considera-
tion is given to the logistic problems involved because no data
are presently available in this area relative to Bridgehead.

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Processing

2. CIA agrees that the NPIC proposal is valid to have [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] undertake the processing. Imagery from the last overflight
12 November 1978, was processed and reproduced at the 9th RTS,
Beale AFB, in accord with established procedures (Ref. b) and
EXSUBCOM coordination. However, the DP produced at Beale was
judged considerably inferior [REDACTED] to that produced
later at DIA/RPP from the ON. RPP also estimated that were
they to have processed the ON, resultant DP's may have been [REDACTED]
superior to that provided NPIC for initial exploitation by Beale.
Even though the 9th was subsequently recertified for processing,
the experience of last year is firm basis for NPIC and CIA
concern.

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3. Although CIA agrees that the proposal is valid, we do not
support it for the following reasons. First, we do not believe
an exception should be made, and precedent set, to change established
procedures for individual missions or programs without thorough
examination of the procedures. Secondly, CIA does not neces-
sarily agree that [REDACTED] is the only, or best, alternative.

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Processing and reproduction at DIA/RPP would seem at least as appropriate.

Exploitation

4. CIA does agree with and fully support the NPIC recommendation that NPIC, and they alone, accomplish the initial exploitation of Cuba overflight imagery unless prior approval is granted on a case-by-case basis through the COMIREX mechanism. It should be established policy that NPIC conduct national first-phase exploitation on such NFIB-tasks missions, particularly where national policy interests are the primary concern. Further justification is again offered by the experience of last November when Beale conducted their own preliminary readout and reported their analysis [redacted] Also, NPIC has a far better capability to correlate intelligence derived from overflight imagery with KH and collateral material.

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Conclusions

5. CIA concludes that no changes should be made to current processing procedures until the EXSUBCOM examines all relevant data, alternatives, and is convinced all overflight imagery should be processed at a facility other than Beale. We further conclude that it become stated, established policy that NPIC alone be designated to conduct first-phase exploitation of Cuba overflight imagery.

6. This memorandum is classified SECRET in its entirety.

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[redacted]
CIA Representative, EXSUBCOM

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